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Housekeepers' Chat

Friday, June 21, 1929.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "Arranging Cut Flowers for the Home." Menu and recipes from Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

Bulletin available: "Aunt Sammy's Radio Recipes."

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My Next-Door Neighbor called to me over the hedge the other day, while I was picking string beans in the garden.

"Aunt Sammy," asked my Neighbor, "would you and your family be interested in a dinner invitation? I've just made two delicious fresh cherry pies -- I'm having one of Uncle Ebenezer's favorite dishes, too -- Beef and Ham Gumbo in a Rice Ring. Could I interest you in such a dinner?"

"You could," I stated emphatically. "I accept with pleasure. Shall I bring my string beans along? They'd go well with the Gumbo."

I left a note for Uncle Ebenezer, and went a-visiting. My Neighbor, cool in a green and white gingham frock, met me at the kitchen door.

"Here," I said, "are beans for the dinner, and one rosebud, 'to satisfy your hungry soul.'"

The beans were forgotten, while my Neighbor found a slender crystal vase for the red rosebud.

"A thing of beauty!" she exclaimed. "I've been studying flower arrangement, and you'd be surprised, Aunt Sammy, how many flowers are neglected, and mistreated when we bring them into our homes. The other day I saw a bouquet of carnations, arranged with asparagus fern. You can imagine how incongruous it was. . . . Let me read you something, while you string the beans."

My friend picked up a magazine, and read extracts from an article on "Flower Arrangement."

"The lady of the house must realize," she read, "that her flower decorations need the same amount of thought as the placement of her furniture, the choice of her wallpaper, or the selection of her draperies and rugs, because a most tastefully furnished room can be marred by a carelessly arranged vase of flowers.

"Never include too many colors in your bouquet. Select two principal ones to feature, such as light blue and pink, pale yellow and white, or brown and gold. Where a flower has several varieties of colors (such as tulips, zinnias, or dahlias) do not place more than one color to a container, unless you are very careful to select harmonious shades.

"Color harmony includes proper selection of a container for the blooms, so that there will be no clash between the color of the blooms, and the color of the container. This is important."

"Common sense will tell us that pansies, violets, forget-me-nots, or other small blooms would look more attractive in low bowls and dishes than in tall vases, and that tall flowers, such as gladiolus, iris, and delphinium are better fitted to thin receptacles," concluded my neighbor.

"Anything more about selecting vases?" I asked.

"Right here," said my friend. "Didn't I tell you I've been studying the subject?"

"Simplicity and fitness are guide words in the selection of a receptacle for any decorative arrangement of flowers, and every homemaker should have a large variety. This does not necessarily entail a large expense. Some of the most artistic are the containers for olives, mustard, oil, ginger, etc. These are much better than the vases, ugly in line, unwieldy in shape, aggressive in color, overloaded with decoration, that are manufactured to sell to the innocent and the unwary for Christmas presents.

"A suggestion for the color of receptacles may be taken from the natural environment of the flowers. Swamp orchids spring from gray-green beds of moss, delicately colored flowers of the springtime from the brown leaves of the previous autumn, and later summer flowers from the soft green tints of the sod land.

"For many flowers, nothing is better than plain glass bowls or vases. The stems, showing through the glass, add an effect of color sure to harmonize with the whole. Sweet peas are never more effective than in a straight glass tumbler; pansies need a low bowl, and the lily a high flaring vase.

"Guard against the use of containers which may appear grotesque or fantastic. Avoid baskets in the shape of ducks, or vases with detracting ornaments.

"Now, as to the manner of arrangement. Did you know that there are three decorative elements in plants.-- line, form, and color? Plants whose chief attraction is in form, or line, should be used singly, or in small groups. If the attraction is color, the flowers should be massed. Flowers which have beauty of form, line, and color may be arranged singly, in small groups, or in large masses.

"For instance, take orchids, lilies, and iris. Form is their chief beauty -- they should never be massed.

"Color is the dominant attraction in pansies, sweet peas, violets, and nasturtiums -- the more of these the better.

"The rose has beauty of form, line and color. One long-stemmed rose in a slender vase is a thing of beauty in line, which should give joy to a whole household; a group of three roses, at different stages of opening, with their leaves, is an example of beauty of form, which would furnish a notable decoration. A mass of full-blown roses would present a glory of color.

"And that," concluded my neighbor, "is all of today's lesson on 'The Decorative Use of Flowers.'" Let me help you string the beans. By the way, Aunt Sammy, I saw a nifty device in the hardware store yesterday -- a bean stringer and cutter. The bean stringer has a guarded blade -- just draw the bean over the blade, and off peel the strings. With the bean cutter you feed the beans through two openings, turn the handle, and out they drop, all nicely cut. Isn't that a clever labor-saving device?"

"Yes," I agreed, "but your transition from three roses in a vase to a string-bean cutter is so sudden that it makes my head swim."

"Life is like that," said my friend, cheerfully. "Will you put the beans on to cook, Aunt Sammy, while I set the table?"

Now, if you'll take your pencils, I'll give you my Neighbor's menu. Pencils enough to go around? All right, here we go: Beef and Ham Gumbo in Rice Ring; String Beans; Toasted Rolls; and Fresh Cherry Pie.

There isn't time today to give you the recipe for the Gumbo, so I'll save that for Monday.

However, I'll give you the recipe for the Fresh Cherry Pie, in case you do not own a Radio Cookbook. Five ingredients, for Fresh Cherry Pie:

2 cups tart pitted cherries	1/8 teaspoon salt
3/4 to 1 cup sugar, according to taste	1 tablespoon flour, and
	1 tablespoon butter

Five ingredients: (Please repeat)

Wash and pit the cherries. Place them in a saucepan, bring to the boiling point, and simmer for 5 minutes. Drain the fruit, and with each cup of cooled juice mix 1 tablespoon of flour. Cook until thickened. Add the sugar, butter, and cherries, and mix well. Line a deep pie tin with pastry, and bake until the crust is golden brown. Pour in the hot fruit mixture, moisten the rim of the crust, and place the uncooked crust over the fruit. Turn the dough well over the cooked crust, so the juice will not escape during the cooking. If desired, strips of dough can be used in place of the top crust. Cook the pie at a low temperature so the juice will not boil over.

To repeat the menu: Beef and Ham Gumbo in Rice Ring; String Beans; Toasted Rolls; and Fresh Cherry Pie.

Monday: "Summer Time Toys -- or the Backyard Playground." Program will include recipe for Beef and Ham Gumbo in Rice Ring.

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